

D 525

.B745

Copy 1

"The War in Europe"

AND ITS LESSONS
=== FOR US ===

AN ADDRESS BY
WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN

WASHINGTON, D. C.
NOVEMBER 1, 1915

List
3007 Mikroskopen
Ja. 4. 15

THE WAR IN EUROPE

AND ITS LESSONS FOR US

Address delivered by William Jennings Bryan at Johnstown, Pa., November 1, 1915. This address presents the line of argument which he has, during the past four months, followed in urging peace and opposing preparedness.

Mr. Chairman: I appreciate the opportunity which this occasion affords to present to the people of Johnstown a subject which is in their minds and on my heart. I am grateful, too, for the gracious words which have been employed in presenting me to you. If you feel, as I do, that the Chairman has been more than generous, please remember that one in public life must be over-praised by his friends in order to make up for the unjust criticism which he receives from his enemies.

While I have found receptive audiences all over the country, there is no community in which I would expect a more sympathetic hearing than in this, because the distinguished gentleman who represents you in Congress views the subject from the same standpoint that I do. Whenever a new question arises upon which the people have not expressed themselves, it is important that each individual should make known his views in order that public opinion may represent the voters generally and not a portion of the people only. The country would be fortunate if all of our public men were as candid and as courageous in taking a position as Congressman Bailey, who honors you as he is honored by you.

In order that you may follow me the more easily, I shall outline in advance the address which I am to deliver to you. It naturally divides itself into three parts: first, the war as it is and its injury to neutrals; second, the false philosophy out of which the war has grown and the natural results of that false philosophy; and, third, the way out, or the road to permanent peace. The subject is presented with a view to emphasizing the lessons which this country can draw from the conflict beyond the ocean.

No matter by what standard you measure this war, it is without precedent or parallel. I will not call it the *greatest* war in history, for the word great implies something more than bigness. When we speak of a great institution or a great movement, we have in mind something more than mere size. There have been, I think, greater wars than this, but none that approached it in bigness. It is the biggest war ever known if we measure it by the population of the nations at war—never before have so many people lived in belliger-

ent nations. It is also the biggest war of which history tells if we measure it by the number of enlisted men who face each other upon its many battle fields. The estimates run from twenty-one to thirty-one millions. Rather than risk exaggeration, let us take the lowest estimate; it is sufficient to make the war impressive. In fact, the number is so great that the mind can scarcely comprehend it. Let me translate it into everyday language by comparing it with our voting population. We have never cast as many as twenty-one million votes at an election. That means that if all in every State who have on a single day exercised the right of suffrage could be gathered together in one place, the concourse, vast as it would be, would fall several millions short of the number now actually engaged in fighting.

More than two million have been wounded thus far. If on any part of the globe one hundred thousand persons were swept to death by pestilence, or flood, or famine, the world would stand appalled; and yet, in a little more than a year, more than twenty times one hundred thousand have been summoned to meet their God, and everyone owes his death to the deliberate intent and act of a fellowman. More than five million have been wounded—this will give you some idea of the awful toll that this awful war is exacting in life and suffering.

If we measure the war by the destructiveness of the implements employed, nothing so horrible has ever been known before. They used to be content to use the earth's surface for the maneuvers of war, but now they have taken possession of the air, and thunder bolts more deadly than the thunder-bolts of Jove fall as if from the clouds on unsuspecting people. And they have taken possession of the ocean's depths as well, and death dealing torpedoes rise from out the darkness to multiply the perils of the sea. They have substituted a long range rifle for a short range rifle, a big mouthed gun for a little mouthed gun, a dreadnought for a battle ship, and a super-dreadnought for a dreadnought, to which they have added the submarine. And they now pour liquid fire on battle lines and suffocate soldiers in the trenches with poisonous gases. Inventive genius has been exhausted to find new ways by which man can kill his fellow-man!

And the nations which are at war are not barbarous nations—they are among the most civilized of the earth; neither are they heathen nations—they are among the Christian nations of the globe. They all worship the same God; and most of them approach that God through the same mediator. They offer their supplications to a common Heavenly Father and then rise up to take each other's lives. ✓

It would be bad enough if the penalties of this war fell only upon the guilty; but a vast majority of the men who die and of the women who weep have had neither part nor voice in

determining whether there should be peace or war. It would be bad enough if the burdens of this war fell only upon the nations participating in it, but like a mighty flood this war has inundated the world, and neutral nations as well as belligerent nations are suffering.

The Latin-speaking Republics are kept busy night and day trying to preserve neutrality; they maintain an extensive patrol over the three mile strip along their coasts to keep big nations from violating their neutrality by fighting within their territorial limits. And all the neutral nations are bearing burdens of taxation which would not be necessary but for the war; they are compelled to resort to new and unusual methods for the collecting of revenue because the war has put their fiscal systems out of joint.

The trade of the world is deranged and our nation, the greatest of the neutral nations and the one with the largest foreign commerce, is suffering more than any of the others. When the war began we were using the ships of other nations largely for the carrying of our merchandise, when, all at once, the very nations whose ships we employed became involved in war, and then one side drove the ships of the other side into our harbors and compelled them to intern there, and, according to International Law, there these ships must remain during the war, idle and useless, while we suffer for lack of ships. And the nations that drove these merchantmen from the seas are not under any obligation, according to International Law, to supply vessels to take the place of the ones of which they have deprived us. On the contrary, they are at liberty to withdraw their own vessels for use in the transport service, and to some extent they have done so, still further crippling the carrying trade of the ocean. Because of lack of ships and because of the increased risks of the sea it has sometimes cost seven times as much to send a bale of cotton across the ocean as it cost in normal times. When on the Pacific Coast a few weeks ago, I learned that it then cost nearly three times as much to transport a bushel of wheat to Europe as it cost in time of peace. These are some of the burdens which neutral nations are bearing; and, in addition to these, all of them are in danger of being drawn into this war although none of them desire to take part in it.

(When you understand International Law as now interpreted and applied, you will feel as I do, that International Law seems to have been written for the benefit of nations at war rather than for the benefit of nations at peace. (I am hoping that, when this war is over, we shall be able to secure such changes as may be necessary to write International Law upon the theory that peace, and not war, is the normal relation between nations—amendments which will make the rule read, not as it seems to now: namely, that nations at peace may attend to their own business so long as they do not interfere

with the fight; but will provide that nations that do fight must not disturb the peace, the commerce, or the prosperity of the nations that prefer to substitute reason for force in the settlement of their international differences.

I have called attention to the outstanding features of this war that you might comprehend its magnitude; and I have mentioned some of the injuries suffered by neutrals that you might understand how earnestly the neutral nations long for the return of peace, but I can not conclude this part of my address without impressing upon your minds two facts which it is necessary for us to keep in mind. If all the newspapers had obeyed the President and observed neutrality his tasks would not have been so delicate and the people would have been better informed. But while most of the newspapers have tried to be neutral, we have had two unneutral groups—the pro-ally group and the pro-German group. The pro-ally group has emphasized our disputes with Germany, and the pro-German group has emphasized our disputes with Great Britain. We have had disputes with both; we have protested to Germany against the use she has made of submarines, and to Great Britain against interference with our trade with neutrals. If you will read the notes which our Government has sent, you will find that our rights, as we understand those rights, have been violated, not by one side only, but by both sides, and that injuries have come to us from both sides.

This is the first fact which we must keep in mind, and the second is related to it; namely, that while both sides have injured us, neither side has desired to do so. The injuries which we have suffered have not been intended against us, but have been incidental to the injury which each has intended against the other. They are like two men shooting at each other in the street, who are too much interested in killing each other to pay any attention to the bystanders who get the stray bullets from both sides. In order to deal patiently with the problems presented by this war it is necessary that we should understand both of these facts—I repeat the statement of them—namely, that both sides have injured us, but that neither side desired to do so. It would be unfortunate enough for us to go to war with a nation that hated us and wanted war with us; God forbid that we shall ever compel a nation to go to war with us if it is not an enemy and does not want war with the United States.

And now allow me to ask you to consider the false philosophy out of which this war has grown and the natural results of that false philosophy. Before speaking of the real cause, it is worth while to note that some of the causes which have produced war in the past are not responsible for this war. There have been race wars in history—wars that have been the outgrowth of race prejudices which have sometimes extended through centuries. But this is not a race war: the

racés are all mixed up in this war. Saxon and Slav are allies; Latin and Frank are allies; Teuton and Turk are allies. And now, since Bulgaria has entered the war, Slav is fighting Slav, and it is not yet known whether the Greek, if he enters the war, will side with Turk or Roman. The races are inexplicably mixed.

And it is not a religious war. There have been religious wars, although we can not understand how a war could arise over a religious difference. We have learned to believe that the right to worship God according to the dictates of one's conscience is an inalienable right, and it would never occur to us that a man would kill another in order to prove that his religion is better than the other man's religion. According to our theory, if a man desires to prove the superiority of his religion, he lives it, for we do not count a religion as worthy of the name if it does not manifest itself in the life. There have, however, been religious wars, but this is not one of them. On the Bosphorus the crescent and the cross float above the same legions; a Protestant Emperor of Germany is the ally of a Catholic Emperor of Austria; and you will find fighting in the same army corps representatives of three great branches of the Christian church, Catholics, members of the Church of England and members of the Greek church. The religions are as badly mixed in this war as the races.

And it is not a family war. There have been family wars—wars that have had their origin in family feuds or in family greed, but in this war the families are mixed. The Emperor of Germany, the King of England, and the Czar of Russia are cousins, members of one Royal family, although you would never suspect from the way they treat each other that they are closely related by ties of blood.

And there was no cause of war apparent on the surface. Within a month of the beginning of the war the rulers who are now fighting each other were visiting each other; they were being hospitably received and royally entertained. When one of them had a birthday, the others all joined in wishing him many happy returns of the day. It would be a libel upon the rulers now at war to say that they knew that a cause existed adequate to produce such a war. For had they known of the existence of such a cause, it would have been their duty to their subjects to lay aside social festivities and the exchange of compliments that they might join together and remove the cause of war. But without a race cause, a religious cause, a family cause, or any cause visible to the public, this war began, and such a war as history has never known! There must be a cause and it must be a human cause, for no one who loves God would ever blame Him for this inhuman war. It behooves us to find the cause, that, knowing the cause, we may, by avoiding it, avoid the consequences.

I have tried to find the cause of this war, and, if my analysis

of the situation is correct, the cause is to be found in a false philosophy—in the doctrine that “might makes right.” This doctrine was formerly proclaimed quite publicly; now it is no longer openly proclaimed, but it is sometimes practiced when the temptation is sufficient. Before you become excited—while you can yet reason, I appeal to you to set the seal of your condemnation against this brutal, barbarous doctrine that “might makes right.” And that you may see more clearly the importance of reaching a conclusion and proclaiming it, I call your attention to the fact that there is but one code of morals known among men and that is the code that regulates individual life. If this code of morals is not to be applied to nations, then there is no moral code which can be invoked for the regulation of international affairs.

If I were an artist, I would carry with me a canvas and reproduce upon it one of McCutcheon’s recent cartoons. He represents war and anarchy by two brutal looking human figures. Across the breast of war he has written “might is right,” and across the breast of anarchy the words “dynamite is right.” I challenge you to draw a line between the two doctrines. The nation that takes the position that it is at liberty to seize whatever it has the power to seize, and to hold whatever it has the strength to hold; the nation that plants itself upon the doctrine that might makes right, has no system of logic with which to address itself to citizen or subject who, as against his neighbor or as against his government, invokes the kindred doctrine that dynamite is right.

If you will take your Bibles and turn back to the story of Naboth’s vineyard, you will find that Ahab violated three commandments in order to secure a little piece of land. The commandments read, “Thou shalt not covet;” “Thou shalt not steal;” and “Thou shalt not kill,” and these commandments are not only without limitation, but they are not subject to limitation.

Take for instance the commandment against covetousness. After specifying certain things that must not be coveted, the commandment concludes with the clause “or anything that is thy neighbor’s.” If this has any meaning, it covers everything. There is no process of reasoning by which we can retain that commandment and make it binding upon the conscience of the individual if we hold sinless the nation that covets the territory of another nation. And yet the coveting of territory has been the fruitful cause of war.

And so with the commandment against stealing. It does not read “thou shalt not steal on a *small scale*,” it simply says “thou shalt not steal.” And yet I am not telling you anything new when I tell you that as a rule—not always, but as a rule—it is safer even in this country for a man to steal a large sum than a small sum. If he steals a small sum he is just a common, vulgar thief and nobody has any respect for

him; if he has any friends they are careful not to allow the fact to be known. If, however, he steals a large sum, he has two advantages over the petty thief. In the first place, if he steals enough, he can employ the ablest lawyers, and his lawyers can usually—not always, but usually—keep him out on bail until he dies a natural death while they discuss technicalities in all the courts of the land. And he has a second advantage; if he steals a large sum, he can always find enough people to furnish him social companionship who will be so amazed at his genius that they will never mention his rascality in his presence. If we find it so difficult to visit the same indignation upon grand larceny that we do upon petty larceny we must not be surprised if, when one nation steals a large amount from another nation, there are some who regard it as an act of patriotism.

And the commandment against killing does not read that you must not kill unless a large number join with you. On the contrary, the Bible plainly declares that “though hand join in hand, they shall not be unpunished.” And it does not say that if you do kill, you should be gentle about it and use the most approved methods. On the contrary, there is no intimation anywhere that the moral character of the act can be changed by the method employed in putting an end to a human life. It is just a plain, blunt “thou shalt not kill,” and yet as we read history we are compelled to admit that it has been easier for governments to hang one man for killing one man than to punish killing by wholesale. And many poets have felt impelled to express themselves much in the language employed by the author of Gray’s *Elegy* who speaks of those who “wade through slaughter to a throne, and shut the gates of mercy on mankind.”

I have called attention to these commandments for the purpose of emphasizing the fact that if we adopt the doctrine that “might makes right” we must be prepared to repudiate all of the moral code upon which we rely for the protection of individual life and the guarantee of private property.

The nations that adopt the doctrine that “might makes right” are quite sure to act upon the maxim “like cures like,” the foundation upon which the law of retaliation is built. The logic of the law of retaliation is like this: If your enemy is cruel, cure him of his cruelty by being more cruel than he; if your enemy is inhuman, instead of attempting to lift him out of his inhumanity by the power of a good example, be more inhuman than he. Nations that enter a war on the theory that “might makes right” are soon in a neck and neck race for the bottomless pit, each nation justifying its own cruelty and inhumanity by the cruelty and inhumanity of its enemy.

I have purposely applied this false philosophy to those far away before applying it at home because I have learned by

experience that it is easier to persuade people to endorse a proposition when applied to others than when applied to themselves. But if I may assume that you have followed me and that we are now in agreement, I am now prepared to apply this false philosophy to a matter with which we are compelled to deal whether we desire to do so or not. The issue is upon us and can not be avoided.

There was a time when some believed that war was a moral tonic—when some actually thought that unless people were kept up to fighting pitch they would degenerate. That seems absurd to us, for we know that, if war were necessary to man's moral development, it would not be left to accident or chance. If war were a necessary thing, we would plan for it as we plan for other things which we consider necessary. We know that food is necessary for the body and therefore we provide that the body shall receive food at stated intervals, the intervals being adjusted to the body's needs. And so, because we believe the mind in need of education we provide for terms of school. If we believed war to be necessary we would call in experts and ascertain just how long a man could go without killing some one and yet maintain a high standard of civilization, and then we would provide for wars at such regular intervals as, in our opinion, would insure man's progress, and the time between wars would then be like the time between school terms—a time when we could rest and relax and get ready for another war. This we would do if we regarded war as necessary. But, however war may have been considered by some in the past, the world now believes war to be not only unnecessary and undesirable but a calamity.

If there are any who doubt this I am prepared to furnish recently secured testimony. When this war began the President offered mediation and the rulers of the nations then involved immediately answered and their answers were so much alike that one answer might have served for all. What did they say? Each ruler said in substance: "I am not guilty; I did not desire this war; I am not to blame for this war; some one else began it." They all with one accord denied responsibility. The world is to be congratulated that we have reached a time when no ruler in a civilized land dares to admit that he caused this war or even desired it—this is a long step in advance. It is not necessary, therefore, to waste any time in an effort to prove that war is a curse. That may now be taken for granted, and we are at liberty to devote all of our energies to the prevention of war.

But just when it has become possible to unite in an effort to prevent war we find a radical difference of opinion as to how war can be prevented. A propaganda is being actively carried on which has for its object the establishment of the doctrine that the only way to preserve peace is to get ready for war. The exponents of this theory admit that war is a

horrible thing and that it should be avoided, but they contend that the only way to prevent war is to organize, arm and drill, and then stand, rifle in hand and finger on hair-trigger—and preserve the peace. I never expected to hear this theory advanced after the present war began. At each session of Congress, during the past fifteen or twenty years, we have heard some advocating this doctrine and insisting on more battleships and a larger army, but their interest could generally be traced to their business connections—they were anxious to furnish the preparedness themselves and therefore advocates of the theory. But when this war broke out I thought that at least one good would come out of it, namely, that no one would hereafter stand before an intelligent audience and argue that preparedness would prevent war. If war could be prevented by preparedness, there would be no war in Europe today, for they have spent a generation getting ready for this war. They had the kindling all ready; all they needed was a match. When the war broke out those best prepared went in first and others followed as they could prepare, and I believe that, if we had been as well prepared as some now ask us to be, we would be in the war today shouting for blood as lustily as any of them.

This is so serious a matter and it is so vitally important that we should follow the course best calculated to prevent war that I beg you to listen while I present the reasons which lead me to believe that the preparedness which they now propose would not only not prevent war, but would actually provoke war—that with the things that necessarily accompany it preparedness would inevitably lead us into the wars against which they ask us to prepare. In the first place we can not have a period of preparedness without submitting ourselves to the leadership of those who believe in the doctrine that peace rests upon fear; that we can only preserve the peace by making people afraid of us. This is the folly of the ages—the very theory that has led Europe into this present conflict. And more, if we are to be driven to preparedness by the scares that are now being worked up, we must follow the leadership, not of those who advocate moderate preparedness, but of those who insist upon extreme preparedness. If we must prepare a little because we are told that one nation may attack us, we must prepare more if another group of jingoes warns us against an attack joined in by several nations, and we must go to the very limit if a third group pictures an attack in which the world will combine against us. There is no limit to the amount of preparation that we shall need if we are to provide against every imaginary danger and every possible contingency.

The real question which we have to decide is, What shall be our standard of honor? Shall it be the European standard—which is the duelist's standard—or shall it

be a standard in keeping with our aspirations and achievements? The advocates of extreme preparedness are attempting to fasten upon this country the duelist's standard of honor and we know what that standard is because we had it in this country a hundred years ago. When that standard was supported by public sentiment men were compelled to fight duels even when they did not believe in the practice; they were branded as cowards if they declined. The case of Alexander Hamilton is an illustration in point. While I prefer the ideas of Jefferson to the ideas of Hamilton, I recognize, as all must, that Hamilton was one of the heroic figures of the revolutionary days. He fought a duel and fell, and the last thing he did before he left home for the fatal field was to prepare a statement which he left to posterity, saying that he did not believe in the practice, but that he felt it necessary to conform to the custom in order to be useful in crises which he thought he saw approaching. The duelist standard of honor was this: If a man had a wife and she needed him, he had no right to think of his wife; if he had children and they needed him, he had no right to think of his children; if his country needed him, he had no right to think of his country. The only thing he could think of was that he must kill somebody or be killed by somebody. According to the duelist's standard of honor, it was more honorable for a man to throw his wife and children upon the care of a community than to allow what he called an insult to go unchallenged. It required moral courage on the part of many to effect the change which has been wrought on this subject, but the change has come and we not only have a law against dueling in every State in the Union, but we now call the man a coward who sends the challenge, not the man who declines it.

About fifty years ago a prominent statesman of Georgia received a challenge from another statesman of that State. Had the challenge been received a century ago instead of a half century the one who received it would hardly have dared to decline. But a change was taking place and the challenge was declined in an answer that has become a part of history. The challenged party said: "No. I have a family to take care of and a soul to save and, as you have neither, we would not fight on equal terms. Therefore, I will not fight." No nation is challenging us; no nation is trying to draw us into war with itself. But if, in a moment of excitement, one of the madmen of Europe were to challenge us, I think we would be justified in answering in the spirit of the answer of that Georgia statesman: "No. We have the welfare of a hundred millions of people to guard and priceless ideals to preserve, and we will not get down and wallow with you in the mire of human blood, just to conform to a false standard of honor."

Do not allow yourselves to be deceived or misled as to the

real issue. The question is not whether this nation would defend itself if attacked. We have a potential power of defense such as no other nation has today—such as no other nation has ever had, and other nations know it. There is no danger that an attack would not be resisted, and we would not depend upon the jingoes. They would be too busy making army contracts and loaning money at high rates of interest to reach the front. If we ever have a war, we will depend, as in the past, upon those who work when the country needs workers and fight only when the country needs fighters. }'

The question, I repeat, is not whether we would be willing or able to defend ourselves if attacked. The real question is whether we shall adopt the European standard of honor and build our hope of safety upon preparations which can not be made without substituting for the peaceful spirit of our people the spirit of the militarist and the swagger of the bully. The spirit that leads nations to put their faith in physical force is the spirit that leads people into war. It is the spirit that expresses itself in threats and revels in the ultimatum.

If you would know what the dangers of preparedness will be if preparedness becomes a national policy and is administered by those who are leading in this crusade, just imagine what the situation would be today with so many opportunities to get into trouble, if we had in the White House a jingo with the duelist's standard of honor and anxious for a fight. We have reason to be grateful that we have as President a man who loves peace and is trying to find a peaceful solution of all the problems that confront us.

I ask you next to remember that it is an expensive thing to prepare for wars that ought never to come. It cost us \$15,000,000 to build the last battleship launched, and that was only one-tenth of the amount spent on the navy that year. You might think, from the manner in which the jingoes belittle our army and navy, that we are at present spending nothing on preparedness. But we are, as a matter of fact, spending now two hundred and fifty millions of dollars annually, *getting ready for war*. We are spending more than one hundred and forty-seven millions on the navy and over one hundred million on the army; and how much are we spending on agriculture? The Department of Agriculture, which looks after the interests of the largest single group in this, the largest agricultural country in the world—the Department of Agriculture which plants experimental stations throughout our land and sends representatives throughout the world to gather information for the farmer's benefit—this department receives an appropriation of twenty-three millions a year. We are, in other words, spending more than ten times as much getting ready for war as we are spending on the Department of Agriculture. And yet the jingoes are not satisfied. They say that we must now turn over a new leaf; that we must get ready in earnest.

There are two organizations in this country which, together claiming a monopoly of the patriotism of the nation, have taken upon themselves the task of getting the country ready for war. The Security League thinks that we should spend three hundred millions a year on the navy and one hundred and fifty millions a year on the army—two hundred millions more than we are now spending, or nearly double the present appropriations. The Navy League is older, had more ciphers at its disposal and had the advantage of making its bid after the other bid had been made. It insists that we ought to appropriate five hundred millions for the navy and have an army of a million men. Its program could not be carried out for seven hundred and fifty millions a year—three times the present appropriation, or an increase of five hundred millions a year.

To show you what a burden this would cast upon our taxpayers let us assume that the appropriations for the army and navy will be kept at what they are now—about two hundred and fifty millions a year—and inquire what we could do with this proposed increase of five hundred millions a year—five billions in ten years—if we spent it for things beneficial. I was in California last summer and learned from a commissioner of highways of the work they are doing in the building of hard roads. They are spending eighteen millions of dollars and their plans contemplate two highways running from the Oregon line to the Mexican line—one down the Pacific Coast and the other down the great central valleys of the State. These two highways are to be connected at the county seats; a splendid system. The commissioner told me that it had been found by experiment that a farmer can haul four times as much with the same team on a hard road as he can haul on a dirt road, and he can haul it any day in the year and any hour in the day, and he does not have to consult the weather bureau when he hitches up his team. They are also building hard roads in Oregon. The road between Ashland and Medford has already reduced the cost of carrying freight between the two points 50 per cent. The railroads charge 16 cents per 100; the auto trucks haul for 8 cents and in addition have eliminated drayage charges at both ends of the line.

They are building hard roads in the State of Washington; the road between Seattle and Tacoma is near enough completion to enable auto buses to compete successfully with the steam railways and the electric lines.

I have made a calculation to see how much hard road could be built for five billions—the five hundred million increase would aggregate that sum in ten years. From information furnished by the Department of Agriculture I find that the average cost of a macadam road 16 feet wide and 6 inches thick is a little over \$6,000 a mile. That there may be no

doubt about the estimate being sufficient let us arbitrarily raise it to \$8,333.33½ per mile, which will enable us to make the computation in round numbers. If we count the distance from ocean to ocean at 3,000 miles and the distance from north to south at 1,200 miles, we can with five billions of dollars build enough macadam road, three miles for \$25,000, to make 100 highways from the Atlantic to the Pacific, putting them twelve miles apart, and highways north and south twelve miles apart, so that when the five billions were spent the country would be gridironed with macadam roads twelve miles apart east and west, north and south, and no American citizen would then live more than six miles from a hard road that would take him anywhere in the United States.

If the jingoes insist that we are in danger of attack, let us propose that we get ready by building roads: it will greatly increase our defensive power if we are able to quickly mobilize our army and rapidly transport it to the point threatened. And there is an advantage about this kind of preparedness; if, after we have prepared ourselves, the war does not come, we shall be able to make good use of the preparation in the work of production. If, however, we divert the money from useful channels and spend it all on battleships and arms and ammunition, we shall have wasted our money if the war does not come; and if it does come, the chances are that before it comes changes in methods of warfare will very much reduce the value of the preparation in which we have invested.

But as some may be more interested in having the volume of loanable money increased than in having good roads I present another calculation. The total capital and surplus of all the banks of the United States—national, State and private—aggregate a little less than four billions of dollars; with five billions we could duplicate every bank, double the loanable bank capital and surplus of the nation and have a billion dollars left with which to celebrate prosperity.

The taxpayers of the country will not be willing to bear the burdens necessary for the proposed preparation unless they are convinced that some nation is about to attack us. The jingoes understand this and they are, therefore, bearing false witness against other nations. They tell us to beware of Japan on the west, and if that does not frighten us they pick out some nation in Europe and accuse it of having designs against us; and if that does not frighten us they say: "Beware of the fate of Belgium!" How any normal mind can think of Belgium and the United States at the same time passes understanding. Belgium has seven millions and a half of people while we have a hundred millions. Would not an ordinary mind, working smoothly and without excitement, be able to see the difference between seven and a half and a hundred? And there is a still greater difference. Belgium is separated from the countries roundabout by an imaginary

boundary line, while we have the Pacific Ocean on one side and the Atlantic Ocean on the other. If any one is unable to see the difference between an imaginary line and an ocean, let him learn what difficulty the nations have had in moving armies across narrow channels and then he will understand the protection of the Atlantic Ocean.

We can not single out a nation and begin to prepare against it without cultivating unfriendliness toward that nation, and we can not make hatred a national policy for a generation without having our people anxious to fight as soon as they are ready to fight. If the nations at war had spent in the cultivation of friendship but a small percentage of the amount they have spent in stirring up hatred, there would be no war in Europe today. (We should not transplant upon American soil this tree of hatred unless we are prepared to eat of the fruits of the tree, for it has been bearing its bloody fruit throughout the years.)

The third reason which I ask you to consider is this. The preparedness which we are now asked to make is against nations which are not preparing to fight us. But suppose we get ready to fight them; will they not prepare against us? If they can scare us when they are not prepared, will we not scare them when we do prepare? And then will not their preparation compel us to prepare more, and will we not scare them again and they us again, and we them again, until bankruptcy overtakes us all? This is no new thing. The people who profit by furnishing preparedness have been playing the nations of Europe against each other for a generation. Every battleship that is built in one country is made the excuse for building more battleships in other countries. Let me illustrate the plan of the battleship builder. Suppose three farmers lived around a little lake and a battleship builder wanted to increase his business—how would he go at it? He would go to the first farmer and say: "You are helpless. If your two neighbors were to combine against you, they could overcome you; your lack of preparedness is an invitation to them. Let me build you a battleship and anchor it here by your land. Then they will see that you are prepared and they will be afraid of you and peace will be preserved." He would then go to the second farmer and say: "Do you see that battleship over there? Do you know what that is for? That is for you. Are you willing to invite attack by being defenseless? Let me build you two battleships and then he will see that you are prepared and will be afraid of you and peace will be preserved." He would then go to the third farmer and say: "Either one of your neighbors is more than a match for you alone; together they can annihilate you. Your only safety lies in the building of three battleships. Then when they see you are ready they will be afraid of you and the peace of the lake will be preserved." By this time he would be able to go back to the

first man and say: "Your little battleship is out of date. It is a provocation instead of a protection. Unless you are willing to build more ships you had better sink that one. It shows that you want to fight and everybody knows you can not fight. You must have four battleships of the latest pattern in order to prevent war by being prepared for it." And so on and so on. This is what they have been doing in Europe. Is it possible that they can entice us into this mad rivalry?

If we are urged to depart from the traditions of the past and to enter upon a new policy, there are two answers which can be made, either of them sufficient. First, if we ever intend to change our policy, the change must not be made while this war lasts. If we change now, it will be a confession that we have been wrong and that Europe has been right, and if we make this confession, we shall not only be powerless to assist the belligerent countries by a good example, but we shall, by imitation, encourage them in the course which has drawn them into this unprecedented conflict. If we are ever to change our policy, now of all times is not the time.

We must consider also our influence on Latin America. If we adopt this new policy and turn our energies from the arts of peace to preparation for war, will not our neighboring republics be urged to follow our example? Can we afford to take the responsibility of retarding their progress by encouraging them to divert their money from needed improvements, to expenditures which are not only unnecessary, but a menace to the friendly relations which now exist between them? There is no excuse for the present outburst of war spirit—it is not only without excuse, but contains infinite possibilities for harm.

Second, there never has been a time in fifty years when we were in less danger than now. No nation has any thought of waging war against us and our preparedness is increasing *relatively* more rapidly than ever before. If the warring nations keep on killing each other as they are killing each other now, burning up property as they are burning it up now, and mortgaging the future as they are mortgaging it now, they will not have left enough able-bodied men, enough money or enough credit to threaten a nation like this. No, there is no excuse for the attempt which is now being made to lash the country into a fright over possible wars. Let us do what we can to stop the war in Europe; humanity, as well as our own security, demands it. But if we can not stop the war there—if the dogs of war must fight—we should at least keep hydrophobia out of this country while the war lasts.

And now let us consider the way out or the road to permanent peace. And before taking up the real way out let us for a moment look at some of the ways that do not lead out. Some talk of annihilation and argue that the war must go on until one side completely effaces the other. Annihilation is a big word and the annihilation of a nation a very difficult

task. Long before they are in sight of annihilation they will be so sick of bloodshed that they will stop. There are already signs of sickness now. They have been striking in the coal mines on one side and in the gun factories on the other. On one side they have been protesting against threatened conscription and on the other against the doctrine of conquest. No, they will not carry the war to the point of annihilation, and if they did it would be a crime against civilization. If they do not know each other, we know them all, for their children have come among us and have helped to make this country what it is. We know that these belligerent nations have reached their present positions through struggles that have lasted for centuries and that each one has a priceless contribution to make to the future of the world. God might have made all the flowers of one color and with a single fragrance, but the world would not have been as attractive had he done so. And so God might have made all the nations with one history and a single language, but I believe that the world is better for their rivalries and their competitions; they together constitute one resplendent political bouquet.

Some think that if the war does not go on until annihilation takes place it must at least go on until one side is so completely triumphant that it can dictate the terms of peace, compel the acceptance of those terms, and thereafter maintain the peace of Europe by the sword. But when we consider the immense masses of men on either side this thought is almost as idle as the thought of annihilation, and it will not brighten the future if as result of this war one nation or group of nations emerges from the conflict master on land or sea.

If there is one lesson which history teaches more clearly than any other it is that nations which aspire to mere physical supremacy have no hope of immortality; the fact that they put their faith in force is proof that they have in them the seeds of death. The pathway of human progress is lined with the wrecks of empires which, when at the zenith of their power, thought themselves invincible.

What the world needs is not a despot to fix the terms upon which the rest shall live; its great need is that these nations shall be brought together in a spirit of friendship and fellowship that they may cooperate in working out the destiny of Europe. If this nation has any influence, that influence must be exerted to bring the warring nations together and not to encourage them in the false hope that a permanent peace can be built on force or fear.

All of the rulers of the nations at war tell us that they did not want the war and did not cause it, but none of them tell us how it can be brought to an end. Have not these neutral nations, all of whom bear burdens though they are not to blame, a right to know what it is that, being done, peace may be restored? For what are the nations fighting—not in gen-

eral terms but specifically? Is it territory that they want, then how much and where is it located? Is it blood that they demand, then how much more blood must be shed to avenge the blood already shed? If they will not answer the neutral nations, will they not make answer to their own people? The day will come when this accumulated sorrow will overflow—when this pent-up anguish will find a voice—and then, if not before, the rulers must answer that stern question which shakes thrones and fixes the farthest limits of arbitrary power: “Why do we die?”

Europe has had machinery for war, but not for peace. The nations of Europe could go to war in a minute, but they were not sufficiently supplied with machinery for the adjustment of difficulties that defied diplomatic settlement. And we can not be harsh in our criticism because, until recently, this nation was almost as poorly supplied as the European nations with the machinery for the preservation of peace. Until within three years our best treaties were those known as the “Arbitration Treaties” and they had two serious defects. First, they only ran five years and then died. And when one of these treaties died it had to be renewed by the same formalities required for its negotiation. It had to be ratified by two-thirds of the Senate, which meant that though the President might desire to continue it and though a majority of the Senate might desire to continue it, the extension of its life could be prevented if a minority of the Senate, more than one-third, objected. But a still more serious defect was found in the fact that these treaties did not cover all questions—they excepted questions of honor, questions of independence, vital interests and interests of third parties, the very questions out of which wars are apt to grow. When a man is angry every question is a question of honor, every interest a vital interest. Man angry is a very different animal from man calm; when a man is angry he swaggers about and talks about what he *can* do, and he generally overestimates it. When he is calm he thinks about what he *ought* to do and listens to the voice of conscience.

We now have thirty treaties with nations representing three-fourths of the world and these treaties cure the defects of which I have spoken. In the first place, instead of dying at the end of five years they never die. They run on and on and on until twelve months after one side or the other has asked that they be discontinued. I believe that neither side will ever ask that these treaties be discontinued. I have such faith in these treaties that I believe that a thousand years from now the name of Woodrow Wilson and my name will be linked together in the capitals of the world and that these treaties will preserve the peace of our nation by furnishing machinery by which peace can be preserved with honor.

But what is more important than length of life, these treaties *contain no exceptions*; they cover *all* disputes of every

kind and character. Each one of these thirty treaties provides that every dispute that defies diplomatic settlement, if not by some other treaty submitted for final settlement, must be submitted to an international commission for investigation and report. Each one of these thirty treaties also provides that the period of investigation may last a year, and each one of these treaties further provides that during the period of investigation neither side shall declare war or begin hostilities. Here are three provisions, new to treaty-making, which reduce war between us and the contracting parties to a remote possibility.

We do not contend that war is made impossible—I only wish it were possible to make war impossible. But in order to secure the investigation of all questions it was necessary to reserve to each nation the right of independent action at the conclusion of the investigation. If any one believes that war may sometimes be necessary, let him find consolation in the fact that every one of these treaties specifically reserves the right of our nation to go to war. If any desire war, all they have to do is to stir the people up to fever heat and keep them there for a year; then if no other way out is found, the nation is at liberty to fight its way out. And I so much believe in the right of the people to have what they want that I admit the right of people to go to war if they really want it. But I feel as a North Carolina Congressman expressed himself, that if we are to have war it would be better for the people to vote it upon themselves than to have others vote it on them. If there is any question upon which there should be a referendum vote, it is the question of peace or war which may mean life or death to so many people. And if we have a referendum vote on war, it will only be fair that the women shall vote as well as the men, for women bear the larger portion of the burden in time of war. I believe that the women should vote on all questions, but if they vote on only one, it ought to be at an election which decides the issue between peace and war.

And I agree with the North Carolina Congressman in another matter. He suggests that it would insure deliberation on the part of the voters if the vote was taken with the understanding that those who voted for war would enlist first; and that those who voted against war would constitute a great reserve army which would not be called into service until after all those who voted for war had had a chance to show what they could do. I like the idea and I venture to add another suggestion. I am a journalist, among other things; whenever any one asks me what I am, my answer is, a journalist. I am proud of the profession, though not of all the members of it. If we have war, I shall insist in the name of the journalists of the country that the first battle line shall be made up of jingo editors that they may have the glory of dying before any one else is hurt.

These thirty treaties will, in my judgment, go far toward preserving peace and I believe that the principle ought to be applied to all nations. If the plan is good enough to offer to all nations—and the offer has never been withdrawn; if the plan is good enough to be entered into with nations representing one billion three hundred millions of people; if the plan is good enough to be endorsed in principle by Germany, Austria and Belgium, countries with which treaties of this kind have not yet been negotiated—it is good enough to be used with any country before we go to war with that country.

But I will go a step further: even if we use the treaty plan and it fails to secure a settlement—or if we fail to use it and reach a point where we must decide, either to go into this war or to postpone final settlement of the dispute until this war is over—if we must choose between these two alternatives, I believe it would be the part of wisdom to postpone final settlement until the war is over. First, because postponement would make war unnecessary, and that would be a sufficient reason for postponing it. We would have no difficulty in settling any dispute which we now have or which may arise during the war but for the fear of the effect of the settlement upon the war itself.

But even if a postponement did not prevent war, it would be better to have our war after this war is over than during this war, because it would then be our own war with the country with which we had our dispute and we could not only go into the war at pleasure, but come out at will. But this war is not our war—it is everybody's war—and if we go into it, we can not come out without consulting others, and others would determine also what we would fight for while we were in—and God forbid that we shall ever tie ourselves to the quarrels, rivalries and ambitions of the nations of Europe.

And now bear with me for a moment while I present three reasons why it is imperatively necessary that we shall not enter this war. I shall not present these reasons in the order of their importance, rather in inverse order. First, no one can tell what it would cost us in dollars to enter this war. It is not like any other war and therefore estimates based upon the past would be of little value. Let those who glibly talk of war give us a guess as to what it would cost to take part in this war and then give a guaranty that their guess is high enough. Many predictions have been made in regard to this war, but so far none have been verified. Would it cost one billion? One of the jingo papers insisted a few weeks ago that Congress should be called together immediately to vote a credit of one billion dollars in anticipation of a possible war. It would be more likely to cost us five billions or ten, but even if it cost ten billions that would not be the greatest objection to war. There are two other objections that are more important.

The second objection is based upon the possible loss of life. How many men would it cost us to take part in this war? A hundred thousand? They have already killed over two millions; one hundred thousand would hardly be enough for our quota in such a war. If we go into this war we can not go in in a stingy way or as a miserly nation. If it is manly to go in, it will be manly to play a man's part and be prodigal in blood and money.

The danger of war with Germany now seems to be passed and the country is relieved to have the American position in the submarine controversy accepted. But while there was a possibility of war—while the question was acute—some of our American papers were insisting that we ought to go to war with Germany at any cost. I do not believe that our people would be willing to send one hundred thousand brave Americans to death because a little more than a hundred took ships that they ought not to have taken into danger zones about which they fully understood. It is not that our people did not have a right to take those ships. Under international law they did have a right to sail on those ships, but great international questions can not be settled on naked legal rights. There are duties as well as rights. Let me illustrate. Every young man, when he becomes of age, has a legal right to leave his home and make a career for himself. He is not compelled to consider either the wishes or the needs of his parents. But, fortunately, most of our young men put their duty to their parents above their legal rights and inquire about the welfare of the old folks before they leave home.

And so every American citizen has duties as well as rights. Do you say that it is the duty of this Government to take its army and follow an American citizen around the world and protect his rights? That is only one side of the proposition. The obligations of citizenship are reciprocal. It is the duty of the citizen to consider his country's safety and the welfare of his fellowmen. In time of war the Government can take the son from his widowed mother and compel him to give his life to help his country out of war. If, in time of war, the Government can compel its citizens to die in order to bring the war to an end, the Government can, in time of peace, say to its citizens that they shall not, by taking unnecessary risks, drag their country into war and compel this sacrifice of their countrymen.

In time of riot a mayor has authority to keep the people of his town off of the streets until order is restored. Has not the Government of a nation like ours as much authority as the mayor of a city? When the world is in riot our Government has, I believe, a right to say to its citizens: "You shall not embarrass the Government in dealing with this question. You shall not add to your nation's perils. You must keep out of the danger zone until your Government restores order and

compels respect for the rights of American citizens." But suppose it cost us not one hundred thousand men but a half million or a million. That is not the greatest objection to the war.

Great as is the first objection, based on the possible cost in money, and greater still as is the second objection, based upon the possible cost in blood, there is a still greater objection; viz., that we can not become a belligerent and at the same time remain neutral.

We stand at the head of the neutral nations; the world looks to us to act as mediator when the time for mediation comes. If, for any reason, no matter what that reason may be, we enter this war, we must step down from our high position and turn over to some other nation an opportunity such as never came to any nation before and may never come again!

Then, too, we are the next of kin to all the nations now at war; they are blood of our blood and bone of our bone. Not a soldier boy falls on any battlefield over yonder but the wail of sorrow in his home finds an echo at some American fireside, and these nations have a right to expect that we will remain the friend of all, and be in position to play the part of a friend when a friend can aid.

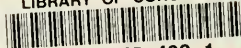
Some nation must lift the world out of the black night of war into the light of that day when an enduring peace can be built on love and brotherhood, and I crave that honor for this nation. More glorious than any page of history that has yet been written will be the page that records our claim to the promise made to the peacemakers.

This is the day for which the ages have been waiting. For nineteen hundred years the gospel of the Prince of Peace has been making its majestic march around the world, and during these centuries the philosophy of the Sermon on the Mount has become more and more the rule of daily life. It only remains to lift that code of morals from the level of the individual and make it real in the law of nations, and ours is the nation best prepared to set the example. We are less hampered by precedent than other nations and therefore more free to act. I appreciate the value of precedent—what higher tribute can I pay it than to say that it is as universal as the law of gravitation and as necessary to stability? And yet the law of gravitation controls only inanimate nature—everything that lives is in constant combat with the law of gravitation. The tiniest insect that creeps upon the ground wins a victory over it every time it moves; even the slender blade of grass sings a song of triumph over this universal law as it lifts itself up toward the sun. So every step in human progress breaks the law of precedent. Precedent lives in the past—it relies on memory; because a thing never was, precedent declares that it can never be. Progress walks by faith and dares to try the things that ought to be.

This, too, is the leading Christian nation. We give more money every year to carry the gospel to those who live under other flags than any other nation now living or that has lived. The two reasons combine to fix the eyes of the world upon us as the one nation which is at liberty to lead the way from the blood-stained methods of the past out into the larger and better day.

We must not disappoint the hopes which our ideals and achievements have excited. If I know the heart of the American people they are not willing that this supreme opportunity shall pass by unimproved. No, the metropolitan press is not the voice of the nation; you can no more measure the sentiment of the peace-loving masses by the froth of the jing press than you can measure the ocean's silent depths by the foam upon its waves.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 015 845 498 1

